

Aboriginal Affairs

Report urges co-operation, partnerships to address Aboriginal economic issues (01/05/15)

NB 464

May 15, 2001

FREDERICTON (CNB) -- A new report highlights the need for co-operation and partnerships between Aboriginal communities and all levels of government to increase Aboriginal participation in the economy.

The report, *Strengthening Aboriginal Participation in the Economy*, was endorsed May 11 at the meeting of federal, provincial and territorial Aboriginal Affairs ministers with Aboriginal leaders held in Winnipeg. The report is intended to be a guide for governments, non-governmental organisations, Aboriginal governments and groups, and the private sector in strengthening Aboriginal participation in the economy.

"The report reviews the challenges and barriers to Aboriginal economic development, outlines opportunities for federal, provincial and territorial governments as well as Aboriginal communities, institutions and governments, and the need for private sector involvement," said Justice Minister Brad Green, the minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. "This report provides all levels of government with a framework to increase Aboriginal participation in the economy."

The report illustrates a number of successful Aboriginal economic development initiatives. Two New Brunswick success stories included are the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI), a joint federal-provincial Aboriginal development mechanism, and the Computer Operating Systems Engineer training program at Tobique First Nation, sponsored through the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund and Training and Employment Development. The program recently graduated its first class.

All parties at the Winnipeg meeting agreed to the general recommendations regarding adopting the report, engaging the private sector, developing partnerships, sharing information, with a focus on youth.

Ministers and Aboriginal leaders directed their officials to meet within 30 days to begin developing a work plan to implement the report recommendations. They agreed to meet again in December to review the work plan as well as the progress of implementation.

The conference also endorsed plans to hold a national Aboriginal Youth Conference in Edmonton in October. The theme of the conference will be *Building Connections*. Aboriginal youth will be asked for their input on implementing a National Aboriginal Youth Strategy.

The conference will be attended by Aboriginal youth representatives and Aboriginal elders as well as

representatives of industry, educational institutions, and governments.

01/05/15

MEDIA CONTACT: Craig Chouinard, communications, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 506-444-2519.

01/05/15

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